Connick Raps DA About Bail Policy

S-11/31/69

By ALLAN KATZ

District Attorney candidate Harry Connick produced figures to show that four companies wrote 92 per cent of the bail bonds that led to $1,209,200 in uncollected bond forfeitures under the administration of Jim Garrison.

Connick said one of the companies, which owes $77,500, is in receivership and it is unlikely any of the funds owed by it ever will be collected. A case involving $711,800 owed by another company, Maryland National Insurance Co., also is presently tied up in court. The company in receivership is United Benefit Fire Insurance Co.

In an address to the Mid-City Kiwanis Club at Lenfant's Restaurant yesterday, Connick said a total of 1,173 accused criminals had skipped bail in the period from 1965 to 1969.

CONNICK SAID most bail-bond skippers had been charged with such crimes as theft and possession of stolen property, carrying concealed weapons, narcotics offenses, prostitution, forgery and burglaries.

However, he said, there also are isolated instances where persons accused of capital crimes such as attempted murder, aggravated rape and armed robbery had somehow obtained bond and then disappeared.

Connick told the Kiwanis that in the collection of forfeited bail bonds, "Mr. Garrison has failed miserably."

The DA candidate said his study of bail bonds covers the period from 1965 to Aug. 1, 1969.

A STATES-ITEM check with State Insurance Commissioner Dudley Guglielmo produced the information that Guglielmo is processing only one claim against one company involving $363.25.

Connick said the more than $1.2 million represents a "legitimate debt" owed the city that may never be collected.

"This $1.2 million rightfully belongs in the city treasury. How many policemen could the city hire with these funds at a time when we are 700 policemen short? At the rate Mr. Garrison is going, the city treasury will be lucky to ever see a fraction of the funds owed."

CONNICK SAID research showed the bail bond firms which owe large amounts are:

—Maryland National In-

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surance Company which owes $711,800.

—Summit Fidelity and Surety Co., $233,550.

—United Bonding Insurance Co., $93,600.

—United Benefit Fire Insurance Co., $77,500.

None of these companies has more than $70,000 on deposit with the State Insurance Commissioner. The case involving the Maryland National debt currently is tied up in court with the company contending its debt is null and void because the forfeited bail bonds were written with stolen powers of attorney.

United Benefit is in receivership and all creditors are enjoined from any action until the courts act, according to Guglielmo.

Connick said the four companies cited wrote over 92 per cent of all bonds for persons who have skipped their bail.

He also charged that $983,000, or 81 per cent, of the total bonds represent felonies.

CONNICK SAID theft and possession of stolen property, carrying cnncealed weapons, narcotics violations, prostitution, forgery and burglary account for 70 per cent of all crimes involved in bail-bond-jumping cases.

"Who suffers?" asked Connick.

"Obviously, the bonding companies don't suffer. They never have to pay. The individual defendants don't suffer because they skip town or otherwise make themselves unavailable and don't have to face trial.

"The people of New Orleans suffer. The victims of crime suffer. The system of criminal justice suffers. Other states and other cities suffer also.

"WHEN BAIL bond jumpers leave here, they go to another city, another state and start their criminal activity all over again."

Connick told the Kiwanis that what is needed is "a real DA."

He said a "real DA would first do the type of study that I have done on this problem.